

their stomachs, perhaps swallowed whilst seizing their prey; but against such a theory is the fact that the same substances are found inside the true fish-eating Crocodile (*Gavialis gangeticus*, Gm.), which frequents the Indus, Jumna, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Mahanuddi, and their affluents, and captures its prey whilst swimming. Besides stones, portions of crabs and water-beetles (*Dytiscus*) were found in every one. Many had the abdominal scales of snakes; and in one was the decomposed body of an entire otter, in another a water-rat, and in a third some of the roots of the mangrove-bush. Elsewhere tortoises and turtles are preyed upon by them.

Mr. Thomas had some otters (*Lutra nair*) of various sizes, which he had raised from babyhood in order to ascertain what their usual food is. When very young each consumed about one hundred frogs (*Rana cyanophlyctis*, Schn.) daily. But in April when I saw them, and they were about two-thirds grown, these small frogs were more difficult to procure, and they were having six to eight large bull-frogs (*Rana tigrina*, Daud.) daily. This king amongst the frogs does not hesitate in eating those of the smaller species. The otters, irrespective of the food found them, hunted about the garden for whatever they could find.

They evidently looked very suspiciously at the poultry, and when older would, I suspect, help themselves to their feathered companions. One day we placed a live rat in a room and brought the otters; but although they ran up to it, they did not attempt to do it any injury.

Some of these otters were brought up from their earliest days on rice and vegetables, others on animal food; but the dispositions of all appeared to be the same. If they were interfered with in the slightest degree they at once rushed at the person whose interference they objected to. Blows had to be severe to keep them in order, but by degrees they seemed to acquire a wholesome dread of a thick stick.

These otters, then, are not wholly disadvantageous to fisheries in India, as one of the greatest enemies to the ova is to be found in the frogs, and these they devour, to a great extent at least, when in confinement. In places where fish are very scarce, as on the Neilgherries, frogs, snails, and such like food appear to form their usual diet.

7. On a Collection of Birds from Mombas in Eastern Africa.

By R. BOWDLER SHARPE, F.L.S., F.Z.S., &c., Senior Assistant, Zoological Department, British Museum.

[Received September 9, 1873.]

(Plate LVIII.)

For the opportunity of examining this collection I am again indebted to my friend Mr. Ward, of Halifax, to whom once more I



1.

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Mintern Bros. imp

1. BRADYORNIS SUBALARIS.
2. TRERON WAKEFIELDI

have the pleasure of offering my best thanks for the assistance he is continually rendering to the Museum and to ornithology generally. The gentleman who has formed the present collection is the Rev. Thomas Wakefield, who may well be congratulated on the success of this his first undertaking in the cause of ornithological science; for, although chiefly devoting himself to collecting insects, he has found time to form a collection of birds with no inconsiderable result. The number of novelties and rarities is not large; but at the same time the situation of Mombas and the period of the year (January and February) when the birds were collected have shown the route by which some of our European birds proceed on their way to their winter home in South Africa. It would not be fair at present to draw conclusions as to the avifauna of Mombas and its affinities; but the locality shows a mixture of Cape and North-east African forms; and I therefore trust that this is by no means the first collection of birds which we shall receive from this very interesting place.

The excellent work of Drs. Finsch and Hartlaub on the birds of Eastern Africa has been my chief guide in the determination of the species.

1. *ASTURINULA MONOGRAMMICA* (Temm.); Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 59.

Mombas is a new locality for this Hawk, although it has been found to the north and south of it. A specimen in Captain Shelley's collection from the Zambesi, however, is *Asturinuia meridionalis*.

2. *PŒOCEPHALUS FUSCICAPILLUS* (Verr. et Des Murs).

Pionias fuscicapillus, Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 499, tab. vii.

Three specimens. Already obtained at Mombas by Von der Decken.

3. *COCCYSTES JACOBINUS* (Bodd.); Sharpe, P. Z. S. 1873, p. 597.

The occurrence of this species is of interest as showing that it extends along the east coast of Africa; but it is not yet known whether it is a migrant from north to south.

4. *INDICATOR MAJOR*, Steph.; Sharpe, Cat. Afr. B. p. 14.

Two specimens, one adult and one young. This species appears to be altogether new to the avifauna of Eastern Africa.

5. *POGONORHYNCHUS TORQUATUS* (Dumont); Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 503; Marsh. Monogr. Capit. pl. x.

Three specimens of this bird, differing from South-African examples in their smaller size and in the greater extent of black on the breast and hind neck.

6. *PICUS HARTLAUBI* (Malh.); Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 512.

One specimen. This Woodpecker has not previously been recorded northwards of Zanzibar.

7. *CORACIAS GARRULA*, L. ; Sharpe, Ibis, 1871, p. 189.

This species has not been met with before between the Somali coast and Natal. Its appearance at Mombas in the winter season, when alone the bird visits Africa, furnishes us with the information as to the route by which the last-named locality is reached.

8. *CORACIAS CAUDATA*, L. ; Sharpe, Ibis, 1871, p. 194.

This species seems to range over the whole of Eastern Africa. A list of the exact localities inhabited by the species is given in my paper (*l.c.*).

9. *EURYSTOMUS AFER* (Lath.) ; Sharpe, Ibis, 1871, p. 275.

New to the locality.

10. *MEROPS PUSILLUS* (Müll.) ; Sharpe, Cat. Afr. B. p. 4.

M. minutus, Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 188.

Already obtained at Mombas by Von der Decken.

11. *MEROPS ALBICOLLIS*, V. ; Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 185.

Widely spread in North-eastern and Western Africa, but not occurring in the south. Mr. Wakefield sends several specimens, showing that it is not uncommon at Mombas ; and Von der Decken procured it at Zanzibar.

12. *IRRISOR ERYTHORHYNCHUS* (Lath.) ; Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 202.

Recorded for the first time from Mombas, but known from Zanzibar and Somali Land.

13. *HALCYON SEMICÆRULEA* (Forst.) ; Sharpe, Monogr. Alced. pl. 64.

New to Eastern Africa, but not rare in the north-eastern portion of the continent.

14. *HALCYON CHELICUTENSIS* (Stanl.) ; Sharpe, Monogr. Alced. pl. 67.

Several specimens of this little Kingfisher.

15. *PYCNONOTUS NIGRICANS* (V.) ; Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 297.

One specimen.

16. *ANDROPADUS FLAVESCENS*, Hartl. ; Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 295, tab. iii. fig. 1.

One specimen. Procured at Mombas by Von der Decken also.

17. *DRYMÆCA ISODACTYLA* (Peters) ; Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 236.

One specimen, agreeing best with the measurements and descrip-

tion of this species. The determination of an African *Drymæca* is now-a-days no easy matter, notwithstanding the excellent descriptions of Dr. von Heuglin and the authors of the "Vögel Ostafrika's." A synoptic table would be a great boon; but the desiderata in the 'Hand-list' are too great to allow of my attempting one at present.

18. *NECTARINIA COLLARIS* (V.); Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 223.

A female specimen of this little Sunbird, already sent from Mombas by Von der Decken.

19. *NECTARINIA JARDINEI*, Verr.; Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 218.

A specimen in moult, but apparently referable to this Sunbird, which has already been noted from Mombas.

20. *NECTARINIA GUTTURALIS* (L.); Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 216.

Two adults of this Sunbird, already obtained at Mombas by Von der Decken.

21. *HIRUNDO PUELLA*, Temm.; Sharpe, P. Z. S. 1870, p. 319.

One specimen: new to the locality.

22. *HIRUNDO MONTEIRI*, Hartl.; Sharpe, P. Z. S. 1870, p. 316.

One specimen. Mombas is by far the most northerly point from which this species has yet been obtained.

23. *MUSCICAPA GRISOLA* (L.); Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 300.

One specimen. Von der Decken also procured it at Zanzibar.

24. *BATIS SENEGALENSIS* (L.); Sharpe, Ibis, 1873, p. 163.

One specimen with the head black, apparently confirming my suggestion as to this species having a more southern range than *B. orientalis*.

25. *BRADYORNIS SUBALARIS*, sp. n. (Plate LVIII. fig. 1.)

Above ashy brown, with somewhat of a greyish shade, with faint indications of dark brown centres to the feathers of the crown and back, more particularly the former; wing-coverts ashy brown, with light fulvous-brown edgings; quills brown, the primaries narrowly margined with rufous brown, the secondaries margined and tipped with whitey brown, the primaries clearly rufescent at base of outer margin; tail ashy brown, margined and tipped with pale fulvous; ear-coverts pale brown, with very narrow white shaft-lines; lores, feathers round the eye, and cheeks buffy white, shaded with brown; throat and under surface of body buffy white, the sides of the body, thighs, and under tail-coverts, as well as the inner lining of the

primaries fawn-colour; bill and feet blackish. Total length 6·3 inches, culmen 0·58, wing 3·25, tail 2·8, tarsus 0·85.

One specimen of a *Bradyornis*, which I am unable to refer to any known species. It is allied to *B. pallidus*, Müll., but is smaller, darker, and above all distinguished by its dark fawn-coloured under wing-coverts.

26. *DICRURUS DIVARICATUS*, Licht.; Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 323.

Two specimens. Von der Decken also procured the species at Mombas.

27. *TELEPHONUS ERYTHROPTERUS* (Shaw); Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 336.

Two specimens. Already known from the locality.

28. *DRYOSCOPIUS CUBLA* (Shaw).

Laniarius cubla, Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 345.

This species has been recorded from Mosambique and Zanzibar. Mr. Wakefield sends one specimen from Mombas.

29. *DRYOSCOPIUS SALIMÆ* (Hartl. & Finsch).

Laniarius salimæ, Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 349, tab. v. fig. 3.

One specimen.

30. *PRIONOPS GRACULINUS*, Cab.; Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 368.

One specimen of this Shrike, first discovered by Von der Decken in the same locality.

31. *ORIOLOUS GALBULA*, L.; Sharpe, Ibis, 1870, p. 215.

The occurrence of this species at Mombas indicates the route by which the Golden Oriole arrives in South Africa. It is new to the avifauna of Eastern Africa.

32. *ORIOLOUS LARVATUS*, Licht.; Sharpe, Ibis, 1870, p. 223.

One young specimen, apparently of the large form.

33. *COLIUS LEUCOTIS*, Rüpp.; Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. p. 472.

One specimen of the White-cared Coly, which seems to range along the east coast of Africa as far as Zanzibar.

34. *PHOLIDAUGES VERREAUXI*, Bocage, in Finsch u. Hartl. Vög. Ostaf. Nachtr. p. 867.

The occurrence of this species so far north is of the highest interest. The bird noticed by Captain Sperling at Mosambique